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PROBABLE SOVIET RESPONSE TO THE RATIFICATION OF THE PARIS AGREEMENTS

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PROBABLE SOVIET RESPONSE TO THE RATIFICATION OF THE PARIS AGREEMENTS

THE PROBLEM

To estimate Soviet courses of action in the event of ratification of the Paris Agreements.

CONCLUSIONS

1. We believe that the Soviet leaders would regard the rearmament of West Germany and its inclusion in NATO as a serious potential threat to their own security. They probably doubt that West German military forces would be kept within the proposed limits, and probably recognize that the net increase in the strength of the military combination which the USSR confronts in Europe would be greater than indicated by the simple addition of a particular number of West German divisions. On the other hand, the Soviet leaders probably estimate that it would require about three years to complete the proposed rearmament program in West Germany. They would probably consider, therefore, that the potential threat involved in West German rearmament would not emerge at an early date and that there would remain time for possible counterbalancing developments. (Paras. 6-11)

2. We believe it unlikely, therefore, that the initial Soviet response to ratification of the Paris Agreements would be based on the assumption that the security of

the USSR was immediately endangered. We believe that the USSR would take measures to improve its military position, including the strengthening of East German and Satellite forces in connection with the formal establishment of an Eastern European security organization. It would employ all political and subversive means to prevent or impede rearmament in West Germany, and to obstruct its co-operation with its Western partners. It would attempt to make gains elsewhere, under conditions of limited risk, in order partially to offset the accretion to Western strength resulting from German rearmament. In conjunction with this general line of strategy, we believe that the USSR might adopt, for a time, a more menacing posture, including harassment of the Western allies in Berlin and Austria. We believe, however, that the Soviet leaders would be concerned not to allow any increase of international tensions arising from such demonstrations to get out of hand. We believe that the USSR would be willing, after an interval, to negotiate further on Germany, but

would be highly unlikely to agree to German unification on terms acceptable to the West. (Paras. 12-18)

3. If at any stage in the process of implementing the Paris Agreements the various courses of action described above did not, in the Soviet view, sufficiently offset the developing threat of German rearmament, we believe the Soviet leaders would almost certainly take further measures in the attempt to counter this accretion to the strength of the West. These measures would include primarily a sharp build-up of Soviet and Satellite military capabilities. They might also include more threatening courses of action against Berlin, or in the Far East, or elsewhere, with the purpose of arousing fear of nuclear war in the West and causing Western peoples to demand that their governments follow a cautious policy. We believe that, at this stage, the USSR would adopt bolder courses of action than it had previously, but would avoid those which in its judgment clearly entailed the probability of general war. (Para. 20)

4. It is possible that the Soviet leaders may at any time decide that they cannot adequately offset the developing threat of German rearmament. In this case, they would be confronted with two broad alternatives: (a) to undertake an early showdown with the Western Powers on this subject, possibly including the use of force involving grave risks of general war; (b) to attempt to negotiate a settlement in which both Western and Soviet troops would be withdrawn and a reunified Germany would be neutralized with controlled armaments. We believe the USSR would reject the first alternative as too hazardous a gamble under currently prevailing circumstances. In view of the grave disadvantages entailed, we believe the second alternative is only a possibility, but it might be adopted if the Soviet leaders believed it offered the only means, short of general war, to prevent the development of a critical threat to the security of the USSR. We believe, however, that the Kremlin would be more likely to adopt the courses of action described in paragraph 3. (Paras. 21-25)

DISCUSSION

I. ROLE OF GERMANY IN POSTWAR SOVIET POLICY

5. The role that a restored Germany would eventually come to play in Europe has been a key issue in the postwar power struggle between the USSR and the Western Powers. Despite the tremendous postwar growth of Soviet power compared with that of Germany, Soviet fear of Germany, sustained by the memory of Nazi aggression, has remained a powerful force. Soviet policy in Europe since 1945 has been designed to prevent any German settlement which would permit the alignment of a rearmed Germany on the side of the Western Powers. This policy has ap-

parently been based on a belief that the addition of German power to the Western alliance would constitute a serious blow to Soviet prestige, would seriously hamper further Communist expansion in Europe, threaten Soviet control over the Satellites, and perhaps even jeopardize the security of the USSR. The rearmament of even West Germany and its inclusion in the NATO alliance is almost certainly viewed by the Soviet leaders in a perspective of such risks and dangers.

II. PROBABLE SOVIET ESTIMATE OF THE SIGNIFICANCE OF RATIFICATION

6. We believe that the Soviet leaders would regard the rearmament of West Germany and

its inclusion in NATO as a serious potential threat to their own security. They would not take this view because of the importance they attach to the proposed 12 German divisions, plus appropriate air and naval units, but rather because they regard it as probable that German armed power would not be held to these levels. They almost certainly believe that the establishment of West German forces would be accompanied by a reserve training system which would enable the Germans eventually to place a much larger force on war footing at short notice. They probably also believe that the inclusion of German troops would improve the quality of the whole body of NATO forces deployed in Europe. When they take account further of the addition of West Germany's considerable industrial and scientific resources to those of NATO, they probably recognize that the net increase in the strength of the military combination which the USSR confronts in Europe would be greater than indicated by the simple addition of a particular number of West German divisions.

7. The USSR may estimate that considerable risks could arise from West German rearmament, quite apart from the strength which it adds to NATO. The Soviet leaders may fear that a rearmed and relatively independent Germany would eventually embark on an aggressive policy to recover East Germany and might, through inadvertence or design, and without the approval of its NATO partners, provoke a clash which could lead to general war. They probably have little faith in the ability of the other Western powers to curb an independent and rearmed Germany if aggressive elements should come to power.

8. Over and above the specific increase of Western military strength resulting from West German rearmament, the Soviet leaders may feel that this development could ultimately have unfavorable strategic implications. A rearmed West Germany would present a serious additional obstacle to any Soviet attempt to overrun Western Europe. Moreover, while the strategic flexibility of the USSR would be curtailed as the result of the appearance of a local threat in a vital sector

of the Bloc's frontiers, the NATO nations, once West German armed power acquired significant proportions, would acquire increased strategic flexibility in the disposition of their own forces. The Soviet leaders might also estimate that the US would instigate local aggressions in Eastern Europe by German forces without involvement of the US itself. By thus applying the USSR's own technique of aggression by proxy the US could pose a fateful choice for the USSR: whether to risk loss of important positions piecemeal or to intervene with Soviet forces with the risk that general war would follow.

9. The Soviet leaders probably also estimate that the rearmament of West Germany would constitute a serious political reversal, which at least for some time would considerably diminish their capabilities for influencing political developments in Europe. They probably fear that the existence of a sovereign West Germany, growing in power and influence, would increase the difficulty of maintaining internal security in East Germany. In particular, West Germany would exercise a magnetic attraction on East Germans which might create a serious resistance problem for the East German regime. They may also fear that the achievement of such a success in Germany would lead the West, perhaps moved to bolder action by the German presence in Western councils, to adopt further measures which would threaten Soviet control over its Satellites or at least prove costly to Soviet prestige. Moreover, they may estimate that Soviet ability to influence the policies of neutral and neutralist states in Europe and Asia would be reduced by the general gain in Western strength vis-a-vis the Communist Bloc.

10. On the other hand, the Soviet leaders, probably estimate that it would require about three years to complete the proposed rearmament program in West Germany. They probably estimate that political developments might prevent, or postpone indefinitely, many of the adverse consequences of German rearmament. They probably calculate that they have strong capabilities for stimulating and supporting the existing resistance to

remilitarization in West Germany. They probably believe that, as West Germany becomes able to pursue a more independent policy, it may become a disruptive factor in the Western alliance, and that the West Germans themselves would in consequence be more inclined to consider alternatives to their association with the West. They may consider that the Saar and other Franco-German conflicts will lead to charges of bad faith on both sides and to a breakdown of cooperation between these two powers. The Soviet leaders may also believe that the political complexion of West Germany will, under the influence of rearmament and the eventual passing of Adenauer from the scene, undergo changes favorable to their interests. They may calculate that these changes will result in swinging the internal political balance in Germany toward either the Left or Right, or both simultaneously, and that the consequence may be a political climate more favorable to the alternative which Soviet policy can pose for the Germans.

11. In summary, we believe that the Soviet leaders would take a most serious view of both the political and military implications of ratification for their security, but that they would nevertheless consider that the potential threat involved would not emerge at an early date and that there would remain time for possible counterbalancing developments.

III. PROBABLE SOVIET COURSES OF ACTION

12. We believe it unlikely, therefore, that the initial Soviet response to ratification of the Paris Agreements would be based on the assumption that the security of the USSR was immediately endangered. We believe that the USSR would take measures to improve its military position, would employ all political and subversive means to prevent or impede rearmament in West Germany and to obstruct its cooperation with its Western partners, and would attempt to compensate elsewhere, under conditions of limited risk, for the accretion to Western strength resulting from West German rearmament. This general pattern of response would exclude a military action which, in the Soviet view, would involve substantial risk of general war. It

would also exclude major concessions which could provide the basis of a German settlement with the Western Powers.

13. In conjunction with this general line of strategy, we do not believe that there would be any fundamental shift in the Soviet public posture, but the USSR might for a time adopt a more menacing attitude. In view of the vigorous campaign they have made against ratification, the Soviet leaders would probably take some of the measures they have threatened, notably the denunciation of the pacts with the UK and France, and the establishment of an East European defensive system. They might even invoke the terms of the Soviet-Finnish Mutual Assistance Treaty of 6 April 1948.

14. The Soviet leaders may believe that gains elsewhere, particularly in Asia, may partially, though by no means wholly, offset the loss of Soviet prestige and power in Europe. They probably will intensify efforts to conclude a peace treaty with Japan, offering favorable terms, not only to encourage neutralist tendencies in that country, but also to demonstrate to the Germans the advantages of an accommodation with the USSR. They will of course continue their efforts to isolate the US on the issues of Formosa and the Chinese offshore islands, or any other issues in Asia on which the Western allies do not have a firm front.

15. *Attitude Toward Negotiations on Germany.* We believe it unlikely that the USSR would participate in four-power negotiations on Germany for some time after ratification. The loss of prestige which the USSR would suffer by reversing the strong stand it has taken against the possibility of negotiations after ratification would in itself move the Soviet leaders against such a course. Nevertheless, the Soviet leaders recognize that the German desire for unity will persist and that, as long as the USSR retains the capability to grant or withhold unification, it may be able to inhibit the pace and reduce the scale of German rearmament through negotiations, or the promise of negotiation. For these reasons, we believe that the USSR would be willing, after an interval, to negotiate further on

Germany. However, it is highly unlikely that the USSR would agree to German unification on terms that would be acceptable to the West.

16. *Berlin.* Since we estimate that the Soviet response to ratification would not include any moves which would entail substantial risk of war, we do not believe that the Soviet leaders would take strong measures to force the Western Powers out of Berlin. Nevertheless, in view of the new situation created in Germany by ratification, they would regard the Western position in Berlin as politically even more intolerable than before. West Berlin border controls would probably be tightened to strengthen security measures in East Germany and East Berlin. There would probably be some harassment of Western access to the city by way of probing Western determination to maintain the Berlin position. Such moves might be associated with an East German program to build up defenses, and would probably be carried out by the East German regime. In consequence there is likely to be some increase of tension over Berlin in the period immediately following ratification. We believe, however, that the Soviet leaders would be concerned not to allow such a situation to get out of hand.

17. *Austria.* In the initial period following ratification the Soviet authorities, alleging violation of zonal agreements for Austria, may re-establish zonal border controls, and even threaten to partition the country. These actions and threats would probably be based on charges that ratification of the Paris Agreements would be followed by steps to convert western Austria into a NATO operations area and would increase the likelihood of *Anschluss* with Germany. We believe it unlikely, however, that the Soviet leaders would permit any such actions to go beyond the stage of demonstration, or that they would take any course which would limit their freedom of action in using the Austrian issue for future bargaining with the West.

18. *Bloc Defense Measures.* Among the measures which the USSR would probably take to improve its military posture would be the creation of the joint command structure for

Eastern Europe forecast at the recent Moscow conference of Bloc states. Although the USSR already has effective indirect control of Satellite military establishments, the Soviet military would probably find it advantageous in the interest of readiness and efficiency to put these arrangements on an open basis. These formal defensive measures would probably be supplemented by an additional arrangement restricted to Poland, Czechoslovakia, and East Germany as the states most directly threatened by West German rearmament. The over-all structure thus created would probably be presented by Soviet propaganda as the nucleus of a European security organization open to participation by all European states. We also believe it possible that the USSR would strengthen Soviet forces in the Satellites, particularly in East Germany. Satellite forces may likewise be strengthened. The East German forces are likely to be unveiled as a national military establishment and strengthened somewhat, possibly by the introduction of conscription.

19. The USSR would probably accelerate the strengthening of its own armed forces if German rearmament showed signs of successful implementation. However, we see no indication, even in the most recent Soviet budget, of an intention to begin an early rapid build-up of Soviet armed strength. The increased budgetary allocation to defense may be in part a demonstrative measure intended to lend substance to Soviet threats that ratification of the Paris Agreements would increase the danger of war. Since the Soviet leaders probably believe that ratification of the Paris Agreements poses a potential rather than an immediate threat to Soviet security, we believe that Soviet policy will continue to emphasize longer-term qualitative improvement rather than short-term enlargement of its military forces.

20. If at any stage in the process of implementing the Paris Agreements the various courses of action described above did not, in the Soviet view, sufficiently offset the developing threat of German rearmament, we believe the Soviet leaders would almost certainly take further measures in the attempt to counter this accretion to the strength of the West.

These measures would include primarily a sharp build-up of Soviet and Satellite military capabilities. They might also include more threatening courses of action against Berlin, or in the Far East, or elsewhere, with the purpose of arousing fear of nuclear war in the West and causing Western peoples to demand that their governments follow a cautious policy. We believe that, at this stage, the USSR would adopt bolder courses of action than it had previously, but would avoid those which in its judgment clearly entailed the probability of general war.

IV. ALTERNATIVE SOVIET COURSES OF ACTION

21. It is possible that the Soviet leaders may at any time decide they cannot adequately offset the developing threat of German rearmament. In this case, they would be confronted with two broad alternatives: (a) to undertake an early showdown with the Western Powers on this subject, possibly including the use of force involving grave risks of general war; (b) to attempt to negotiate a settlement in which both Western and Soviet troops would be withdrawn and a reunified Germany would be neutralized with controlled armaments.

22. We believe that under currently prevailing circumstances the USSR would reject the first alternative. We continue to estimate that the USSR would finally decide that general war was too hazardous a gamble and would endanger the survival of the Soviet system.

23. There remains the possibility that at some stage the Soviet leaders would agree to settle the German problem by simultaneous withdrawal of Western and Soviet forces and reunification by an electoral process acceptable to the Western Powers. The USSR might see certain advantages in a unified Germany if it could be kept neutralized with its armaments under international control. As against having no control over the rearmament of West

Germany, the USSR might thus hope to exercise, together with the Western Powers, some measure of control over the armaments of a united Germany. Such an arrangement would necessitate the withdrawal of US forces from Germany, and possibly result in large reductions of US armed strength in the rest of Europe. It would allow Germany, freed from the burdens of occupation and a large rearmament program, to intensify economic competition with other countries of Western Europe, and might lead to demands in those countries for a reduction of their own burden of armaments. The fact that the USSR had agreed to such a settlement might in itself tend to stimulate the sentiments for disarmament and "coexistence" in Western countries, probably including the US. In addition, such a settlement for Germany might further reduce Japan's willingness to rearm.

24. The Soviet leaders would, however, almost certainly see grave disadvantages in such a course. Withdrawal of Soviet troops from East Germany would constitute a blow to Communist prestige, and might pose problems of control in the Satellites. The USSR would be required to forfeit economic advantages, including control of East German uranium deposits. Above all, withdrawal from East Germany would require the USSR to give up an area of forward deployment which adds greatly to Soviet military capabilities, both in the air and on the ground. In any case, the Soviet leaders would have profound misgivings about the permanence of any agreement to hold Germany neutralized and under restricted armament.

25. In view of the grave disadvantages entailed, we believe the second alternative is only a possibility, but it might be adopted if the Soviet leaders believed it offered the only means, short of general war, to prevent the development of a critical threat to the security of the USSR. We believe, however, that the Kremlin would be more likely to adopt the courses of action described in paragraph 20.

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